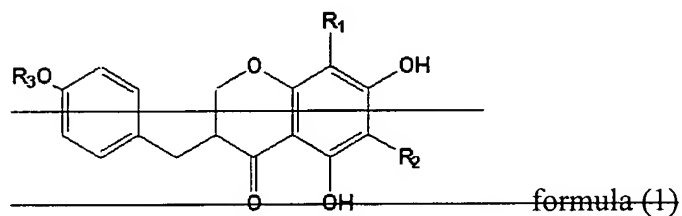


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

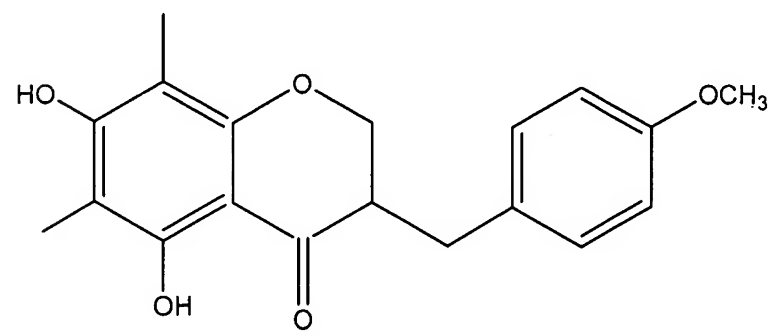
1-6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently amended) A method for inhibiting elongation of melanocytic dendrites comprising:

a step of applying to skin a skin preparation for external use for inhibiting elongation of melanocytic dendrites ~~comprising~~wherein the skin preparation comprises, as an active ingredient, a dendrite elongation inhibitor for melanocytes consisting of ~~a compound represented by the following general formula (1):~~



methylophiopogonanone B indicated by the following formula:



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and/or a salt thereof;

wherein R_1 , R_2 , and R_3 each independently represent a C_{1-4} alkyl group or hydrogen atom.

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently amended) The method for inhibiting elongation of melanocytic dendrites according to claim 7-~~or~~ 8, wherein the skin preparation for external use is used for ~~alleviating~~ reducing dyschromatosis on which tyrosinase inhibitors have insufficient effect.

10. (Currently amended) The method for inhibiting elongation of melanocytic dendrites according to claim 7-~~or~~ 8, wherein the skin preparation for external use is a cosmetic.

11. (Previously presented) The method for inhibiting elongation of melanocytic dendrites according to claim 9, wherein the skin preparation for external use is a cosmetic.